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May 9, 1996

DOCKETED COPY ORIGINAL

Mr. Gene Reynolds  
President  
Directors Guild of America  
7920 Sunset Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90046

**RECEIVED**

**MAY 10 1996**

**FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF SECRETARY**

Dear Mr. Reynolds,

On behalf of Chairman Hundt, I would like to thank you for your recent letter regarding the presentation to the Commission of a recommendation for an Advanced Television standard.

On November 28, 1995 we received a report from the Commission's Advisory Committee on Advanced Television Services (ACATS) making its recommendation for a broadcast standard for digital television. This matter is currently still under consideration by the Commission, and no final decisions have been made. The FCC will be considering a total of at least three Notices on this issue which, when taken together, will provide a complete and current record on all aspects relating to the introduction of digital broadcast television to all Americans. I hope this process will be completed sometime over the next year.

The first of this trilogy was released August 9, 1995 in anticipation of the final report and recommendation made by ACATS. The Commission adopted the second of these three today. For your information, I have enclosed a copy of the press release explaining the nature of the action, as well as a separate statement from Chairman Reed Hundt that I am sure you will find of interest. We expect to release one more Notice this year to consider the methodology of assigning channels for digital broadcast to eligible parties. Through the process of notice, comment and reply the Commission is able to consider a wide variety of proposals.

Many in the cinematic community have expressed concern regarding the appearance of their work on the small screen of television, whether it be today's 4:3 aspect ratio, the proposed wide screen 16:9 dimension or, as you suggest, 2:1. As to the presentation of existing 4:3 programming on a 16:9 wide screen, for those who choose such a system, the receivers could adjust the picture to fill the screen in a manner chosen by the consumer.

*[Handwritten signature]*

This may mean black bars on the edges of the screen, automatic cropping of the top and bottom or even the use of "pan and scan" to fill the screen according to the director's artistic vision and the broadcaster's decisions on how to present the material. For the consumers who choose to purchase less costly 4:3 receivers, or use set-top convertors with their existing sets, similar options will be available to best fill the screens to their preference.

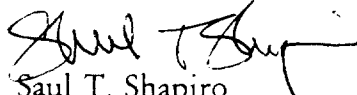
Similarly, many computer enthusiasts are concerned about the impact the standard's adoption would have on scanning formats of advanced displays and the integration of digital broadcast with the NII. I think all informed parties agree that the most important format to achieve this is progressive scanning, typically found today in computer monitors, which many find preferable for still images or high resolution graphics. The other format is interlace, typically found in analog television sets, which some feel is more appropriate for preserving consumer's access to the vast body of work already created for television. Both have advantages and disadvantages and, as you may be aware, have generated many spirited debates during the process leading to the ACATS recommendation.

Your letter suggests that progressive scanning is somehow precluded from this recommendation. In fact, of the eighteen formats proposed by ACATS, fully fourteen are for progressive displays. Of those defined at the 24 Hz frame rate most often used in filmmaking, all are progressive. Only four of the eighteen are defined by interlace scanning. Filmmakers and other content developers would be free, as they should be, to choose the most appropriate way to format their work.

As you are well aware, the issues raised in this proceeding are many and complex, and I regret I am unable to do them all justice in a short letter. I would encourage you to get more information from Mr. Stan Baron, President of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers at 914-761-1100 or 212-664-7557. Stan has been integrally involved in these matters for many years and will be able to present a well balanced perspective on all issues of concern to you. If you would care to discuss this further with me, please feel free to call at 202-418-2600.

Rest assured that this proceeding, far from being over, has in many respects just begun. The Commission welcomes and encourages you to actively participate in this process and to share your concerns so that we may make the best decision in the interest of all Americans.

Very truly yours,



Saul T. Shapiro

Assistant Bureau Chief for Technology Policy  
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# Directors Guild of America, Inc.



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**TO:** MR. SAUL SHAPIRO - ASST. BUREAU CHIEF FOR TECHNOLOGY POLICY  
MASS MEDIA BUREAU

**FAX #:** (202) 418-2801

**FROM:** GENE REYNOLDS

**DATE:** MAY 2, 1996

**TOTAL PAGES:** 3

**MESSAGE:** RE: ACATS PROPOSAL

If this transmission is illegible or incomplete, please contact Colleen Bonilla at (310) 289-2011 or by Telefax at (310) 289-2024.

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May 2, 1996

The Honorable Reed Hundt  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, N.W., Room 310  
Washington, D.C. 20554

RE: ATV Standard

Dear Chairman Hundt:

The FCC is about to make a monumental decision which will cost American taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars. That decision will define the role that television will play in our future. We believe the ACATS proposal for an ATV system should be modified in the following ways:

1. Specify a progressive line scanning architecture that is compatible with multimedia computers. The interlaced architecture proposed by ACATS is based on scanning technology that was invented in 1934. The progressive scanning architecture proposed by the American Society of Cinematographers will significantly improve image quality by eliminating video artifacts created by interlaced scanning. Progressive scanning will also allow directors and cinematographers to manipulate emotional content and perceptions of time by choosing appropriate frame rates during production. In addition, it will also ensure the convergence of ATV sets and multimedia computers, and that is essential for an affordable evolution of a National Information Infrastructure or information superhighway. Progressive scanning will make text readable on ATV screens, and it will enable the public to access films and other entertainment, as well as information on the Internet on their ATV sets.
2. The 1.78:1 aspect ratio advocated by ACATS would legitimize the

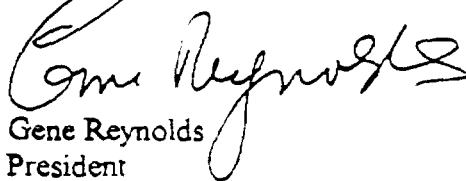
Letter to  
The Honorable Reed Hundt  
5/2/96  
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defacing of thousands of American made films produced in wide-screen formats by requiring "panning and scanning." This would alter both the content and dramatic impact of films seen on ATV. In a digitally based ATV system, it is possible to display all films in their original aspect ratios. This would benefit consumers, who would see movies the way they are meant to be seen, in addition to protecting the value of film libraries and the artistic rights of film makers.

3. We recommend an ATV screen dimension of 2:1, since that would provide an efficient frame for viewing wide-screen films in all popular aspect ratios.

On behalf of the Directors Guild of America, I urge you to keep the ATV hearings open until these issues are resolved

Best regards,

  
Gene Reynolds  
President

GR/cb

pc: Victor Kemper, President  
American Society of Cinematographers